

POSC 178: Political Consequences of Electoral Institutions

University of California, Riverside

Lewis Luartz

Fall 2021

E-mail:	Lewis.Luartz@email.ucr.edu	Course Site:	eLearn (Canvas)
Office Hours:	T, Th 9:30 - 11 AM (PST)* F, 10 AM - 1 PM (PST) [†]	Class Hours:	T, Th 8:00 - 9:20 AM (PST)
Office:	Watkins 2121E and via Zoom	Class Room:	Student Success Center 235

* In person and Online
† Online only

Course Safety Protocols

In response to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the course format may be subject to change with little to no notice, depending upon state, local, and University guidelines. The University of California, Riverside’s mandatory safety measures may be stricter than local, state or federal guidelines and may be subject to change at any time. The COVID-19 pandemic requires all of us to accept the possibility that changes in how this course is taught may be required and that some changes may occur with little or no notice. If any changes occur, you will be given clear instructions as to how to proceed. The uncertainty of the pandemic situation is not ideal for any of us, but we must all try to approach this situation with good-will, flexibility, and mutual understanding.

Course Description

Elections are the cornerstone of democratic government, but the method—or electoral system—used has a much greater effect than just merely filling political offices. The choice of an electoral system influences, among other things, the party system and electoral competition, campaigning, party discipline and legislative behavior, minority representation, the importance of pork barrel politics, and public policy outcomes. It is safe to say that no other political institution has as significant an effect on as many aspects of politics. Understanding the functioning of different types of electoral systems is therefore very important to our understanding of politics. We begin the course by examining briefly some of the basic problems in devising the “perfect” electoral system. We will then consider some of the more common electoral systems used around the world focusing on how votes are translated into legislative seats. In doing so, we consider the

strategic incentives created by the electoral systems and how they affect political competition as well as the other factors mentioned above. Finally, we examine the issue of electoral reform and its complexities.

Course Objectives

An understanding of the actors and processes involved across different electoral systems is essential. This requires understanding how different electoral systems work, as well as how outcomes may vary between them. We thus focus on the following objectives in the course:

1. Understanding how votes are translated into seats within legislatures and non-legislative offices.
2. Differentiating between Majoritarian and Plurality electoral rules.
3. Assessing the advantages and disadvantages of Proportional Representation electoral rules.
4. Differentiating among the two types of Mixed Systems and their electoral outcomes.
5. Analyzing levels of (dis)proportionality among different electoral systems and their implications on democracy and representation.
6. How political strategies and electoral alliances can shape elections and their outcomes.
7. How academic scholars have approached the idea of electoral reform and its complexities.

Prerequisites

Upper-division standing or consent of instructor.

Textbooks

There is one textbook for the course:

- Farrell, David M. (2001). **Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction** (2nd Edition). New York, NY: Palgrave. ISBN: 978-1403912312.

This textbook is referred to throughout the **Weekly Schedule** section as Farrell (2001) (referring to the author and year published).

The following textbook is recommended, but not required, as a supplement to the class:

- Reynolds, Andrew, Reilly, Ben and Ellis, Andrew. (2005). **Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook**. Stockholm, Sweden: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

All other texts and materials referenced in the **Weekly Schedule** section of the syllabus are available online via eLearn (Canvas). It is highly recommended that students complete the readings prior to course sessions each week.

Course Structure

Overview

Our class meetings will take on a simple structure: Announcements, Questions, Brief Review of the Previous Class, Lecture, Additional Questions (if time allows). This is described below in the structure section.

Structure

In terms of announcements, the Instructor will provide you with any important, upcoming, or last minute information relating to the class or the University. From here, the Instructor will take questions from students relating to either announcements or the material. Next, students will receive a brief (and non-comprehensive) review of the previous class's material before delving into the lecture on new material. It is important to note that the lecture will assume that students have read the material for that week's meetings in advance. Finally, if time allows for it, students will have a second opportunity for asking questions relating to the material before the end of the class.

Assignment Weights

The weights associated with each of the course assignments are as follows:

- Class Session Meeting Attendance (Throughout term: 10%)
- Assignments 1 through 4 (4 Total, Pre-Exam 1: 20% Total / 5% Each)
- Assignments 5 through 7 (3 Total, Post-Exam 1: 10% Total / \approx 3.33% Each)
- Exam 1 (Week 6: 30%)
- Exam 2 (Finals Week: 30%)

Note: one assignment will be dropped at the end of the quarter, with full credit being given as a substitute for the lowest score on said assignment regardless of weight.

Assignment Overview

Attendance

As we are starting the quarter with in-person learning, attendance is required at all session meetings unless otherwise stated. *Attendance cannot be made up except as described in the "Emergencies and Exceptional Circumstances" section of this syllabus, found under "Course Policies."* The weekly schedule can be found at the end of the syllabus in the Weekly Schedule section. Students who do not attend the first two weeks of the course will be dropped from the course roster. Any changes to in-person attendance will be announced by E-mail or on the eLearn (Canvas) LMS platform, as well as updated on the syllabus.

Assignments

During certain weeks, students will be given an assignment consisting of questions that incorporate the material presented in class that week and, in some cases, the material from previous weeks. These assignments are always available on the eLearn (Canvas) on the Monday of the assigned week and due on the Friday or Saturday of that same week (see assignment for instructions and due dates). See also the *Weekly Schedule* section for information on specific weeks, and the *Assignment Weights* section for weighting. Note: one assignment will be dropped at the end of the quarter, with full credit being given as a substitute for the lowest score on said assignment regardless of weight.

Emergency Class Pass

Given the current pandemic, there may be at least one instance during which a student may be unable to attend a class session. To alleviate the pressures associated with providing evidence and/or documentation during the quarter, students are given one (1) "Emergency Class Pass." This pass allows students to miss one (1) class session without the need to provide any evidence and/or documentation relating to the absence. This pass provides the student with full credit for that session. *Once the pass has been used, students must provide evidence and/or documentation to make up any credit associated with (an) additional missed day(s) as described in the "Emergencies and Exceptional Circumstances" section of this syllabus, found under "Course Policies."*

Grading Policy

This course adopts the standard University of California, Riverside grading scale. The Instructor reserves the right to adjust the scale dependent on overall class grades at the end of the quarter (not before it). Any adjustments will only ever make it easier to obtain a particular letter grade.

The grade grading scale is as follows:

A+	=	100%	B+	=	87 - 89.99%	C+	=	77 - 79.99%	D+	=	67 - 69.99%
A	=	94 - 99.99%	B	=	84 - 86.99%	C	=	74 - 76.99%	D	=	64 - 66.99%
A-	=	90 - 93.99%	B-	=	80 - 83.99%	C-	=	70 - 73.99%	D-	=	60 - 63.99%

Grades 59.99% and lower will receive an F.

Course Policies

The Syllabus

The syllabus is a contract between the instructor and the students enrolled in this course. If you decide to remain in the class, you accept the course requirements and thereby agree to abide by them. It is important that you know what this class entails, that you acknowledge its requirements and evaluation criteria, and that you make a commitment to finishing the work in a timely and responsible fashion. If necessary, the syllabus and its contents are subject to revision; students are responsible for any changes or modifications posted on the University's course management system, eLearn (Canvas).

Technology During Class Sessions

As we are currently in a pandemic, access to a computer during class sessions and outside of class is necessary. All assignments will be submitted digitally in this class. In the case of any in-class assignments, you will need to bring a computer to class. It is necessary to keep up with the material given the material is complex and may become overwhelming if you do not review it in a timely manner. You are expected to review the readings and/or any supplementary material or videos before class sessions. It is your responsibility to ensure everything is completed in a timely manner.

Audio and Video During Office Hours

Office hours are held in-person and simultaneously via Zoom. You must have access to a computer with audio and video capabilities to access office hours if you choose to do so via Zoom. While you are not required to turn on your video camera, you should at the least be able to ask questions verbally should the need arise if you choose to attend office hours digitally. Unless you have a question, please mute your microphone until you are ready to speak so as to not unnecessarily disturb others during office hours. Be courteous of others.

Attendance Policy

The material for the course can at times seem complex if students do not attend class regularly. It is therefore suggested you attend as many (if not all) of the class sessions as you can. Attendance will be taken in each meeting and will count towards your final grade. If there is an issue preventing you from attending, do reach out and/or come see the Instructor sooner rather than later.

Late Assignment Policy

Except when otherwise indicated, late assignments will be deducted one and one-half (1 1/2) letter grade for every twenty-four (24) hours it is late, up to a maximum of forty-eight (48) hours. After forty-eight (48) hours, the student will receive a grade of zero (0) for the assignment. Remember to check the late policy on assignments and exams to ensure compliance with the stated late policy. Not all assignments allow for late submission.

Emergencies and Exceptional Circumstances

Should an emergency arise, the student must contact the Instructor as soon as possible, and preferably before a course session. Any emergencies must be accompanied by evidence (i.e., note from a Doctor as evidence of having been in a hospital). Routine checkups are not considered medical emergencies and should thus be discussed with the Instructor as soon as possible *before* they occur. Any accidents must be accompanied by photographic evidence by email. Failure to contact the Instructor in a timely manner will result in a judgment call on the Instructor's part and is completely dependent on the gravity of the situation. In all cases, the Instructor's decision on the matter is final.

Exams

All exam information will be distributed at least one week before each exam is due.

Challenging a Grade

Students who wish to challenge a grade are required to submit a written grievance, which includes: the reasons for their dissatisfaction, the grade received, and what grade they believe is merited. Reasons why the requested grade is merited should be supported by evidence from the assignment or exam in question to justify this appeal. The written grievance should be submitted at least two business days before meeting with the Instructor to discuss the assignment. If you choose to appeal your grade, the Instructor reserves the right to issue a grade that is lower than the existing grade. This second, post-appeal decision is final. *The deadline to challenge and possibly change a grade is within forty-eight (48) hours after the posting of the grade on eLearn (Canvas).*

Academic Integrity and Honesty

UCR has a detailed and strict academic dishonesty policy. Please review [Section 6 of the Appendix of the Riverside Division Academic Senate Bylaws](#). There is zero tolerance for any type of academic dishonesty (note: using your own past work is plagiarism if it is not cited appropriately). **If you violate this policy, you will receive an "F" in the course, and be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.**

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities seeking accommodation services should contact the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) as soon as possible for accommodations. While they are located at 125 Costo Hall, it is encouraged that students reach out at (951) 827-3861 due to the pandemic, or request an appointment at sdruc.ucr.edu. Accommodations take time and should be done well in advance. We cannot accommodate you at the last minute so it necessary you seek accommodations well in advance. For this reason, you should contact the SDRC within the first week of the course if you do need accommodations of any sort.

UCR Academic Resource Center

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) provides tutoring and other academic support services to UCR's undergraduate students. Resources provided by the ARC include Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, Study Skills Workshops, as well as several peer mentoring programs. Students are strongly encouraged to visit the ARC, which is staffed by professional and student employees who are well trained to provide academic support and dedicated to fostering academic excellence. Staff work with all students, at all skill levels, in all stages of their undergraduate careers. Participating in these services is most useful to students when used regularly and proactively through the term. Visit arc.ucr.edu or call (951) 827-3721 for more information about hours, location, and the schedule of services.

Respect for Others

Discriminatory/hateful/pejorative and/or demeaning language will not be tolerated. All participants must feel comfortable asking questions and speaking, as voicing one's ideas is essential to the learning experience. Please be respectful of all questions, ideas and views. You will be asked to leave the classroom (or Zoom meeting if/when applicable) if you disrespect anyone and/or exhibit any form of the above, and you will automatically receive a zero (0) for any attendance or graded assignments due that day. This zero (0) grade cannot be made up under any circumstances.

DISCLAIMER: This Course Contains Mature Content

Like most university-level courses, this course deals with material that may be controversial and sensitive for some people. Often, these topics may invoke strong responses based on political affiliation, religious beliefs, personal identity, and experiences. While we will need to engage with such details at times, they will not be the focus of our inquiry. You should nevertheless be prepared to encounter these references. If you have any concerns about any of the material we will be covering in this course at any time, please see do not hesitate to come see me.

Weekly Schedule

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. Be aware that all class meetings and deadlines posted are in Pacific Standard Time (PST).

Week 00, 09/20 - 09/24: Syllabus | Introduction to Elections and the Problem of Choosing

Thursday, September 23

- Readings:
 - Liberalism vs. Populism; Paradoxes, arbitrariness, & institutions, Riker (1982a, ch. 1-2)
 - Win or Lose, Gottlieb (2010)

Week 01, 09/27 - 10/01: Electoral Rules: Turning Votes into Seats | The First Main Type of Electoral Systems: Plurality-Majority Systems

Tuesday, September 28

- Readings:
 - Studying electoral systems, Farrell (2001, ch. 1)
 - Single member district, Farrell (2001, ch. 2)
 - Duverger's Law, Riker (1982b)

Thursday, September 30

- No Class due to American Political Science Annual Meeting Conference.

Week 02, 10/04 - 10/08: Turning Votes into Seats (Cont.) | The First Main Type of Electoral Systems: Plurality-Majority Systems (Cont.)

Monday, October 4

- Important:
 - **Assignment 1 Available**

Tuesday, October 5

- Readings:
 - Majoritarian electoral systems, Farrell (2001, ch. 3)
 - Gallagher & Mitchell (2005, ch. 6)
 - Presidential Elections, Blais, Massicotte & Dobrzynska (1997)

Thursday, October 7

- Readings:
 - Majoritarian electoral systems, Farrell (2001, ch. 3) (Cont.)
 - Blais & Massicotte (2002)
 - What is wrong with Electoral Colleges? Nurmi (2001)
 - Campaign Strategy, Strömberg (2008)
 - Redistricting, WP article

Friday, October 8

- Important:
 - **Assignment 1 Due**

Week 03, 10/11 - 10/15: Plurality-Majority Systems (Cont.) | The Second Main Type of Electoral Systems: Proportional Representation via List PR (Largest Remainder, Highest Average)

Monday, October 11

- Important:
 - **Assignment 2 Available**

Tuesday, October 12

- Readings:
 - Majoritarian electoral systems, Farrell (2001, ch. 3) (Cont.)

Thursday, October 14

- Readings:
 - Proportional Representation, Farrell (2001, ch. 4)

Friday, October 15

- Important:
 - **Assignment 2 Due**

Week 04, 10/18 - 10/22: Proportional Representation via List PR (Largest Remainder, Highest Average) (Cont.) | Variation Among List PR

Monday, October 18

- Important:
 - **Assignment 3 Available**

Tuesday, October 19

- Readings:
 - Proportional Representation, Farrell (2001, ch. 4) (Cont.)

Thursday, October 21

- Readings:
 - Proportional Representation, Farrell (2001, ch. 4) (Cont.)
 - Gallagher & Mitchell (2005, ch. 20)

Saturday, October 23

- Important:
 - **Assignment 3 Due**

Week 05, 10/25 - 10/29: Variation Among List PR (Cont.) | The Single-Transferable Vote | Exam 1 Study Session

Monday, October 25

- Important:
 - **Assignment 4 Available**

Tuesday, October 26

- Readings:
 - The Single-Transferable vote, Farrell (2001, ch. 6)

Thursday, October 28

- Readings:
 - None. Review Readings Up To Tuesday, October 26!
- Important:
 - **Study Session Today!**

Saturday, October 30

- Important:
 - **Assignment 4 Due**

Week 06, 11/01 - 11/05: Exam 1 | Hybrid/Mixed Systems, Electoral Rules, and (Dis)Proportionality

Tuesday, November 2

- Important:
 - **Exam 1 Today**
 - **No Additional Homework Assignments this Week**

Thursday, November 4

- Readings:
 - Mixed systems: A little bit of both? Farrell (2001, ch. 5)
 - Gallagher & Mitchell (2005, ch. 10)

Week 07, 11/08 - 11/12: Hybrid/Mixed Systems, Electoral Rules, and (Dis)Proportionality (Cont.)*Monday, November 8*

- Important:
 - **Assignment 5 Available**

Tuesday, November 9

- Readings:
 - Mixed systems: A little bit of both? Farrell (2001, ch. 5) (Cont.)
 - Electoral systems & party systems, Farrell (2001, p. 161-165)
- Optional:
 - Electoral systems vs. social cleavages, Amorim Neto & Cox (1997)

Thursday, November 11

- *No class due to Veteran's Day (UCR Holiday)*

Saturday, November 13

- Readings:
 - **Assignment 5 Due**

Week 08, 11/15 - 11/19: Electoral Systems and their Consequences on Representation: Ideological Congruence, Ethnic and Female Representation*Monday, November 15*

- Important:
 - **Assignment 6 Available**

Tuesday, November 16

- Readings:
 - The Consequences of Electoral Systems, Farrell (2001, p. 153-161)
 - Disproportionality and Representation, Powell & Vanberg (2000)
 - Golder & Lloyd (2014)
- Optional:
 - Lijphart (1994, ch. 3)
 - Golder & Stramski (2010)
 - Malapportionment, Samuels & Snyder (2001)

Thursday, November 18

- Readings:
 - Ethnic Representation, Moser (2001, ch. 5)
 - Female Representation, Rosen (2013)
 - Female Representation, Ruiz-Rufino (2013)
 - Ethnic & Female Representation, Holmsten, Moser & Slosar (2010)
- Optional:

- Ethnic Representation, Posner (2004)
- Female Representation, Schwindt-Bayer (2009)
- Female Representation, Fréchette, Maiquet & Morelli (2008)

Saturday, November 20

- Important:
 - **Assignment 6 Due**

Week 09, 11/22 - 11/26: Electoral Alliances, Incentives, and Political Strategies

Tuesday, November 23

- Readings:
 - The Personal Vote, Carey & Shugart (1996)
 - Political effects of the Personal Vote, Ames (1995)
 - Hallerberg & Marier (2004)
 - Golder (2005)
 - Blais & Indridason (2007)
- Important:
 - **No Assignments this Week (have a good holiday break!)**

Thursday, November 25

- *No class due to Thanksgiving Holiday Break.*

Week 10, 11/29 - 12/03: Electoral Alliances, Incentives, Political Strategies, and Electoral Reform

Monday, November 29

- Important:
 - **Assignment 7 Available**

Tuesday, November 30

- Readings:
 - The choice of an electoral system, Farrell (2001, ch. 8)
 - The Jenkins Report, Scheiner (2008)
 - Bowler, Donovan & Karp (2006)
 - Choosing electoral system in the FRG, Bawn (1993)
 - Rogowski & Kayser (2002)
 - Chang & Golden (2007)

Thursday, December 2

- Readings:
 - The Socialist Threat, Boix (1999)
 - Blais, Dobrzynska & Indridason (2005)
 - Renwick (2011)

Friday, December 3

- Important:
 - **Assignment 7 Due**

Week 11, 12/06 - 12/10: Finals Week

- *Exam 2 Date: Tuesday, December 7, 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM (PST).*